**Character Analysis: Friar Lawrence**

Friar Lawrence is an important character whose actions contribute to the tragic outcome of Romeo and Juliet. He also helps develop the opposition of youth and age. For example, when Romeo learns that he is banished, he melodramatically shows his despair by weeping on the floor. The Friar, on the other hand, is very rational in juxtaposition to Romeo’s immaturity.

The Friar is a father figure to Romeo, which can be gleaned from the affectionate way he calls Romeo, “my good son” (2.3.50) as well as the obvious trust between them. The Friar is a foil to the Nurse, who is a mother figure to Juliet. He is also a foil to Romeo and Juliet’s impetuous love, warning them to “love moderately” (2.6.14). One of his internal conflicts is deciding whether or not to marry Romeo and Juliet. When he does, his motives become questionable. Does he purely wish happiness upon the lovers or is he also trying to mend the feud at possibly their expense? However, his neutrality between Capulets and Montagues indicates that he really wants peace between the families.

Essential questions regarding the play are related to the Friar. One is, “Who is to blame for the tragic events of the play?” It is the Friar who marries the lovers, then comes up with their escape plan, which goes horribly awry. Both of these reasons, particularly the latter, are substantial evidence of his role in the tragedy.

Another essential question related to the Friar is, “Is it true that the old people are wise and the young are foolish and impetuous?” The interactions between the Friar, Romeo, and Juliet provide much insight into this question. Romeo and Juliet seem temerarious in their passion, whereas the Friar seems calm and wise. However, the Friar concocts the dubious and flawed plan for escape. Also, he is very irresponsible when he marries Romeo and Juliet; a friar should not so easily marry two teenagers of families that hate each other enough to kill. Therefore, older people are not necessarily wise. In fact, they can be rash and foolish.

The Friar seems suspicious for coming up with the plan in Act 4 Scene 1; it’s very devious. Friar Lawrence is also a despicable character in some ways. He is cowardly when he has Juliet take the potion and execute his insane plan rather than confess to the families that he has married Romeo and Juliet. Furthermore, he behaves unethically by urging Juliet to lie to her parents. However, the Friar manages to somewhat redeem himself at the end of the play when he explains the whole predicament to the families in an honest, remorseful way.

The reasons as to why Friar Lawrence is a crucial character in moving the plot of Romeo of Juliet along are: 1) he marries Romeo and Juliet 2) he concocts the plan that leads to their deaths and 3) he demonstrates the contrast between youthful passion and old age. Overall, the Friar seems like a decent man who does stupid things.

Word Count (w/o quotes): 499